(b) what are the reasons for the delay in commissioning this system; and

(c) what is the total cost of the system and what are its benefits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) (a) The Automatic integrated Mail Processing System at Bombay has been commissioned on 29.4.93.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The letter sorting machine has been procurred at a cost of approximately Rs. 20 crores which includes a customs duty component of approximately Rs. 9 crores. The main benefits of the project are faster and better quality sorting, facilitating quicker delivery of mail.

MTNL staff indulging in racket

862. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that CBI officials have arrested six persons including employees of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) for running a racket of providing cheap domestic and international calls to businessmen etc. as reported in the Hindustan Times of 9th July, 1993;

(b) if so, what are the details of telephone rackets running at various places in the country and detected so far during each of the last three years;

(c) whether Government have been monitoring and checking the domestic and international calls coming and going from various telephone exchanges in Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Srinagar cities being made in connivance with telephone operators and since how long these rackets have been operating;

(d) what are the details in this regard and extent of daily loss caused to Government during each of the last three years;

(e) what effective preventive steps have been taken to check these rackets operating in connivance with the telephone operators at each telephone exchange in the country; and

(f) what instructions have been issued by Government to each telephone Department in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes, Sir. The C.B.I. officials have arrested some persons including employees of MTNL on 24.6.1993 after conducting a raid on the basis of a complaint lodged by MTNL. Five officials of MTNL have been placed under suspension in connection with this racket.

(b) Cases of diversion of telephone lines for STD/ISD purposes, tampering with telephone meters, tampering with mater readings, misuse of service telephones for STD/ISD purposes have been reported from various places in the country as under:—

Year	*Number of cases*
1990-91	4
1991-92	21
1992-93	26

Disciplinary action has been initiated against 119 officials found involved in such cases.

(c) and (d) It is difficult to say since how long these rackets have been operating. However, where specific cases come to notice during vigilance inspections and surprise checks or observation, suitable action has been taken, where necessary with the help of police and the C.B.I. The calls put through by the telephone

operators in these places are monitored on sample basis through observation cells. This practice is in vogue for many years now. Exact evaluation of daily loss through such malpractices is not possible.

(e) and (f) Full-fledged vigilance units are functioning in the headquarters of each Telecom. Circle. These units have been instructed to step up surprise inspections of the meter rooms, telephone exchanges, STD PCO and other sensitive areas. Observation of trunk circuits is carried out regularly for detection of any malpractice. Subscribers of electronic exchanges have been advised to avail the dynamic STD facility to prevent misuse of their telephones It is proposed to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 to deal effectively with persons indulging in diversion of telephone lines for illegal purposes. It is also proposed to create dedicated cells of CBI at the four metropolitan cities to deal with cases of leakage of revenue in coordination with departmental officers.

Electronic exchange in Madhya Pradesh

863. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI:
CHOWDHRY HARI SINGH:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the places in Madhya Pradesh where electronic exchanges are likely to be commissioned during 1993-94;

(b) whether STD facility provided recently, is not functioning properly especially in backward districts and districts having sizeable population of Adivasis;

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(d) what achievement is expected in this regard by the end of 19933-94;

(e) what is the target set by Government in this regard to provide STD facility in all blocks tehsils and district head-quarters of the state and also in industrial towns situated in adivasi areas; and

(f) what decisions have been taken by Government on the recommendations made from time to time by Members of Parliament and representatives of the public in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) (i) Electronic telephone exchanges are likely to be commissioned at the following places in M.P. during 1993-94 in replacement/addition to the existing telephone exchanges:

Ashoknagar, Bilaspur, Damoh, Dhamtari, Katni, Khandwa, Morena, Narsinghpur, Raighar, Ratlam, Sagar & Singrauli.

(ii) New telephone exchanges are also proposed to be opened at places where the registered paid demands or telephone connections reach 10 or above subject to technical feasibility. This being a continuous process no specific details are readily available.

(b) and (c) No. Sir, STD facility provided through Carrier Systems at times, get interrupted due to occurrence of faults on open wirelines which are removed as and when reported.

(d) out of the 45 stations having STD facility through Carrier Systems 8 are likely to be provided through stable transmission system viz. UHF, Cable Carrier etc. during 93-94.

(e) i. District Headquarters have already been provided with STD facility.

ii. STD facility to all Tehsil, Block and Industrial towns is proposed to be provided progressively by 1995.

(f) The recommendations of the Members of Parliament and the representations of the public are examined and implemented subjected to technical suitability and feasibility.